

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments and remarks submitted herein. Applicants have amended the specification to include a paragraph claiming the benefit of priority to related applications. In addition, Applicants have amended the specification to add an abstract. The attached abstract corresponds to the English language abstract that was published in the PCT application.

Applicants also have canceled claims 1-36, and have added new claims 37-79. Claims 37-73 correspond essentially to original claims 1-36, but their dependency has been amended. Claims 74-79 relate to a hydroxyalkylstarch- (HAS-) protein conjugate, wherein the binding interaction between the HAS molecule and the protein includes at least one covalent bond between the terminal aldehyde group of the HAS molecule, or a functional group derived from the terminal aldehyde group, and a functional group of the protein. Support for new claims 74-79 can be found, for example, in original claim 1, and in Applicants' specification. For example, the specification at page 4 lines 19-31 discloses that a the binding interaction between a HAS molecule and a protein can be based on a covalent bond between the terminal aldehyde group of the HAS molecule or a functional group derived from the terminal aldehyde group, and a functional group of the protein. In addition, the specification at page 13, lines 15-24 discloses that the terminal aldehyde of a HAS molecule can be selectively oxidized to a carboxyl group or an activated carboxyl group, which then can be coupled to a protein to form an amide or thioester (i.e., covalent) linkage. Thus, no new matter has been added.

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CONCLUSION

Applicants ask that claims 37-79 be examined. The enclosed filing fee takes into account the pending claims following entry of this Preliminary Amendment. Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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